



## THE SAVVY CONSUMER COLUMN

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### **Tips for Preparing Tax Returns**

Nashville, TN- -It's that time of year again. Millions of Americans are preparing to file tax returns to meet the April 15 deadline. Many consumers will make the decision to hire an individual or firm to prepare personal returns. When making the choice of who will complete your tax returns, it is important to choose carefully.

Taxpayers are legally responsible for what is on their tax return even if it is prepared by someone else. Therefore, it is imperative for consumers to be cautious and choose a tax preparer that they can trust.

The Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs offers these tips when selecting a tax preparer:

- Get references or ask friends and family for recommendations.
- Be sure to choose a preparer that is easily accessible and that you are comfortable working with.
- Ask for the preparer's education history or what training is required by their company.
- Make sure you understand the fees that the preparer will charge. Get it in writing.
- Beware of preparers that offer large returns.
- In Tennessee, a tax preparer is not required to be a Certified Professional Accountant (CPA). However, if the preparer is a CPA, you can check with the Tennessee State Board of Accountancy to see if they have ever received any complaints against them. You may also want to check with the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs, The Tennessee Board of Professional Responsibility or your local Better Business Bureau to see if they have any complaints on file.
- Review the completed return to ensure all tax information, your name and your address are correct.
- Visit [www.IRS.gov](http://www.IRS.gov) for information regarding tax scams to avoid becoming a victim.

The Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs is here to help you understand your rights and responsibilities, to resolve complaints through the mediation process, to investigate violations of the state Consumer Protection Act and to clarify consumer protection laws. If you need our services, please feel free to call Consumer Affairs toll-free at 1-800-342-8385 or visit our website at [www.state.tn.us/consumer](http://www.state.tn.us/consumer).

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